THE ALL-ACTION COMIC • LET THE GALAXY BURN!

WARHAMMER MONTHLY

Blood and steel...

DARKBLADE

#41

$2.95 US • $3.25 UK

Strange things are stirring in cyberspace. No, it's not a new threat to the Imperium – it's the massive transformation of the Black Library website, including the long-promised full Dan Abnett interview and a first look at his exciting new novel 'Xenos'. Bookmark the site and check it regularly for the latest interviews, exclusive competitions and sneak previews of new fiction and art. Also on the net, the Black Library was recently featured on the GW Community forums when everyone had a chance to chat about their favourite characters, writers and artists and ask questions of the dark denizens who are the editorial staff. For all of you who missed it, don't worry, you can always email us at publishing@games-workshop.co.uk. Tell us what you think of Warhammer Monthly, Inferno! and our novels and help steer the course of the Black Library into the next four years!

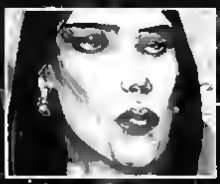
RICHARD WILLIAMS

DARKBLADE

Darkblade finally returns to Hag Graef, only to find the city under siege!

DAEMONIFUGE

Condemned and hunted, Ephrael is caught in the purge of a heretic nest.



OF ANCIENT BLOOD

On the borders of Sylvania the Lady Katarina is waylaid by brigands.

THE ASSASSIN'S TALE

Guesting from its regular slot in Inferno!, another twisted tale of the Ten-Tailed Cat.

DISPATCHES:

The countdown to Titan III continues. Anthony Williams is almost finished on the artwork for part one which can be seen next issue. For those of you who just can't wait, here's a page in progress to whet your appetite.

Black Library novel fans rejoice! To coincide with the release of the Inquisitor game this May we're releasing the first part of a trilogy featuring Inquisitor Eisenhorn, one of the major characters from the rulebook. Dan (Gaunt's Ghosts, Inquisitor Ascendant) Abnett has just delivered the manuscript and Adrian Smith has supplied us with this stunning cover.

GAMES WORKSHOP

A BLACK LIBRARY PUBLICATION

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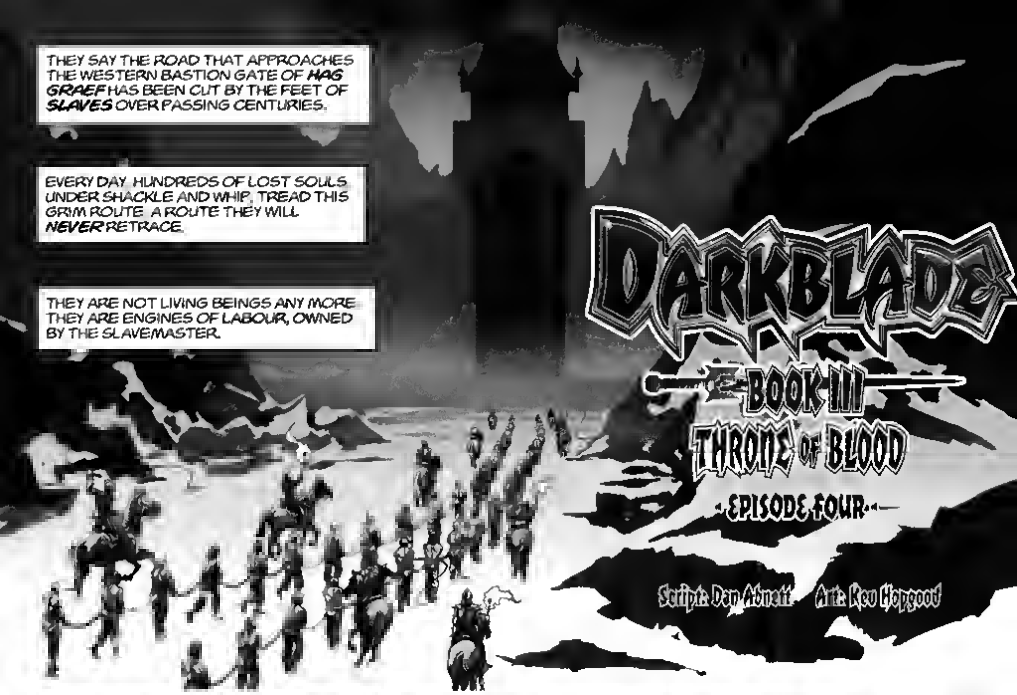

THEY SAY THE ROAD THAT APPROACHES THE WESTERN BASTION GATE OF HAG GRAEF HAS BEEN CUT BY THE FEET OF SLAVES OVER PASSING CENTURIES.
EVERY DAY, HUNDREDS OF LOST SOULS UNDER SHACKLE AND WHIP, TREAD THIS GRIM ROUTE. A ROUTE THEY WILL NEVER RETRACE.
THEY ARE NOT LIVING BEINGS ANY MORE. THEY ARE ENGINES OF LABOUR, OWNED BY THE SLAVEMASTER.
DARKBLADE
BOOK III
THRONE OF BLOOD
EPISODE FOUR
Script: Dan Abnett
Art: Kev Hopgood

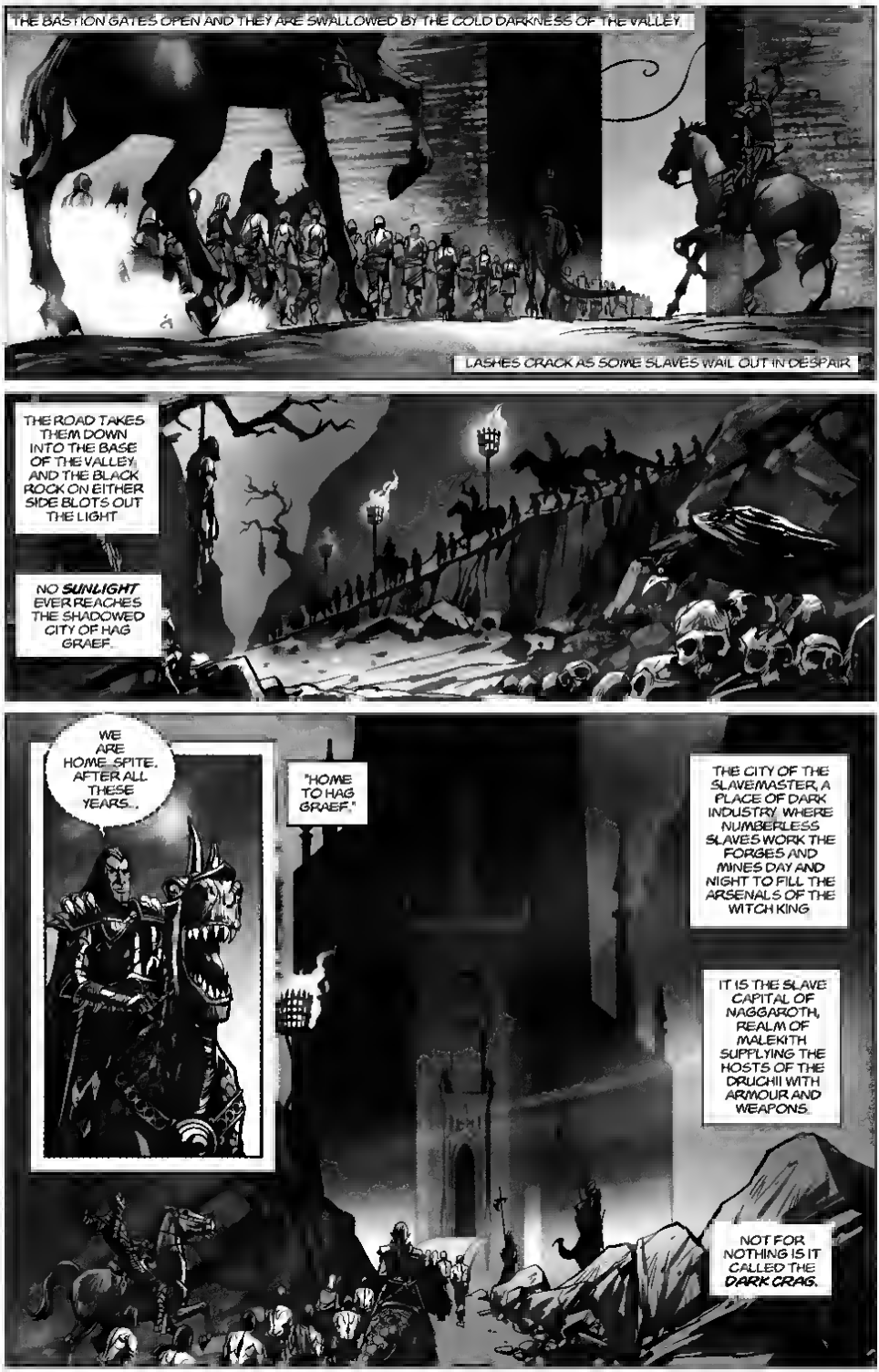
THIS DAY, SLAVEDRIVER ENGVIN BRINGS IN A FULL QUOTA, COLLECTED IN A MONTH OF RAIDS.
HE IS CONTENT. SUCH WORK WILL EARN HIM GREAT HONOUR IN THE COURT OF THE SLAVEMASTER.
HE SMILES AS HE WATCHES THE WEEPING SLAVES TAKE WHAT HE KNOWS WILL BE THEIR LAST GLIMPSE OF DAYLIGHT EVER.

THEY ARE JUST A FEW MINUTES FROM THE BASTION GATE...
MUSPEL! NAREL! CLOSE THEM UP! NO LAGGING!
AT ONCE, SLAVEDRIVER!
GET IN LINE! EVEN PACE! NO LAGGING!
WHHH-KRAK!
YOU HEARD ME, SCUM, GET IN—
UHHK!

ALARM! ALARM! WE ARE ATTACKED!
BLOOD OF KHAINE! WHAT IS THIS?
THERE'S NO MISTAKING THE FOE...
..RAIDERS FROM NAGGOR A STATE OF FEUD-WAR EXISTS BETWEEN THE HAG AND THAT BLACK ARK
IT HAS BEEN THEIR TACTIC FOR MONTHS TO STRIKE AT SLAVE-COLUMNS, DEPRIVING HAG GRAEF OF VALUABLE LABOUR.
BUT NEVER THIS CLOSE, THIS ARROGANT . IN SIGHT OF THE VERY GATES! ENGVIN THOUGHT HE WAS SAFE!
HOLD THE SLAVES! HOLD THEM, CURSE YOU! TO ARMS!
THE SLAVEDRIVER'S MIND WHIRLS, THE GATE GARRISON WILL HAVE SEEN THIS, NO DOUBT, BUT BY THE TIME THEY RIDE OUT...
...ALL WILL BE LOST
DAMN YOU, NAGGORITE!
DAMN YOU TO- YAAAH!
THEN HE HEARS THE DRUM OF OTHER RIDERS SHAKING THE COLD EARTH...
WHAT IN THE NAME OF...

FORTUNE SMILES UPON ME, THINKS ENGVIN.
A BAND OF COLD ONE KNIGHTS, NO DOUBT RETURNING TO THE HAG FROM A FORAY, NOW RIDING DOWN THE ENEMY RAIDERS
HE KNOWS THEM TOO SILAR THORNBLOOD AND HIS MEN, GREAT WARRIORS ALL
THERE'S SILAR NOW, AND FIERCE KUNOR, SON OF KUNOLL..
MIGHTY BROEL, DOLTHAIC THE RUTHLESS, HAEDOR BROTHER OF HAEDRAC, BAPTISED IN BLOOD
AND ONE OTHER... UNKNOWN TO ENGVIN, BUT FAMILIAR SOMEHOW...
SO VERY FAMILIAR..
SHADES OF HAG GRAEF! CAN IT BE?

HAIL, SILAR! I OWE YOU AND YOUR BAND FOR THIS WORK!
I LIVE ONLY TO SERVE THE SLAVE-MASTER, ENGVIN. WELL MET.
LET US ESCORT YOU INTO THE HAG.
WE'LL RIDE TOGETHER! BUT FIRST...
... MY HONOUR TO YOU *ALL*! BROEL! KUNOR! HAEDOR!
AND YOU...
... A FACE I HAD ALL BUT *FORGOTTEN*.
ENGVIN. THE SLAVE-TRADE STILL KEEPING YOU IN SWEET WINE AND SWEETER FLESH?
IT *IS*! *MALUS DARKBLADE*!
THIS IS A DAY FOR SURPRISES *INDEED*!


THE BASTION GATES OPEN AND THEY ARE SWALLOWED BY THE COLD DARKNESS OF THE VALLEY.
LASHES CRACK AS SOME SLAVES WAIL OUT IN DESPAIR.
THE ROAD TAKES THEM DOWN INTO THE BASE OF THE VALLEY, AND THE BLACK ROCK ON EITHER SIDE BLOTS OUT THE LIGHT.
NO SUNLIGHT EVER REACHES THE SHADOWED CITY OF HAG GRAEF.
WE ARE HOME, SPITE. AFTER ALL THESE YEARS...
"HOME TO HAG GRAEF."
THE CITY OF THE SLAVEMASTER, A PLACE OF DARK INDUSTRY WHERE NUMBERLESS SLAVES WORK THE FORGES AND MINES DAY AND NIGHT TO FILL THE ARSENALS OF THE WITCH KING.
IT IS THE SLAVE CAPITAL OF NAGGAROTH, REALM OF MALEKITH SUPPLYING THE HOSTS OF THE DRUCHII WITH ARMOUR AND WEAPONS.
NOT FOR NOTHING IS IT CALLED THE DARK CRAG.

NEWS OF THE DARING ATTACK ON THE SLAVE CARAVAN HAS REACHED THE CITY AHEAD OF THEM. CROWDS GATHER.
SILAR LEADS HIS BAND DIRECTLY TO THE DRACHAU'S PALACE.
AN EXPECTANT HUSH FALLS.
ARE YOU READY, MALUS?
ALWAYS, OLD FRIEND. LET'S SEE WHAT THE SLAVEMASTER MAKES OF ME.
LET'S PRAY IT'S NOT A HEADLESS CORPSE.
THEY'RE ALL HERE. MALUS THINKS... SEVERIN, THE SLAVEMASTERS ELDEST SON AND ALWAYS HIS FAVOURITE. HIS SISTER [redacted] AND OLD SLYFER, THE ROYAL ADVISOR. HE CAN FEEL THEIR HATRED.
HAIL DRACHAU! DARK LORD OF THE HAG!
I AM YOUR WARRIOR, SILAR THORNBLOOD, AND-
ENOUGH OF YOUR SIMPERING, THORNBLOOD

I AM TOLD YOU HAVE DONE WELL. DESTROYED AN ENEMY BAND OUT IN THE WASTES, AND SAVED A SLAVE-RETINUE ON YOUR RETURN.
FOR THOSE THINGS, MY THANKS.
BUT WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT THIS... VERMIN TO MY PALACE?
I HAVE COME TO RENOUNCE MY CRIMES, DRACHAU. TO CRAVE FORGIVENESS, TO SWEAR LOYALTY TO YOU AND HAG GRAEF.
I AM YOUR WARRIOR, MALUS DARKBLADE.
MY WARRIOR? NO! YOU ARE A MURDEROUS DOG! A TRAITOR!
AN ENEMY OF THE DRUCHII!
IF YOU CAME TO FIND FORGIVENESS, YOU WERE A FOOL!
ALL THAT I WILL GIVE YOU IS A BLOODY DEATH!
NEXT: A PRICE OF BLOOD

DAEMONIFUGE
THE LORD of DAMNATION

Chapter Seven

Script: Gordon Rennie
Art: Karl Richardson

NO MATTER WHERE I TRY TO HIDE I KNOW THEY WILL FIND ME
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I RUN, THEY WILL ALWAYS PURSUE ME
AND NO MATTER HOW MANY OF THEM I KILL—

...THERE WILL ALWAYS BE MORE.
IT IS THE HERETIC! THE ONE THE DAEMON-HUNTERS SEEK!
SMALL MINDS. CLOSED TO THE TRUTH.
KILL HER!
ONLY ONE THING TO DO WITH A CLOSED MIND—
OPEN IT.
BRAKK
SKUTCH
YES. ALWAYS SO MANY MORE.

THIS ONE, I DO NOT KILL. THIS ONE, I LEAVE WITH A GIFT.
OF PARNIS OF THE SCREAMING CAGE. OF THE HORRORS I HAVE SEEN.
MY MEMORIES
LET THEM SEE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE EPHRAEL STERN. TO HAVE SURVIVED WHAT I HAVE SURVIVED.
SHE MUST NOT ESCAPE! SWITCH TO EXECUTIONER ROUNDS!
EXECUTIONER ROUNDS. TECH-MAGIC MIRACLES, CREATED TO SEEK OUT LIVING TARGETS –
AAAAAAGH!
CHUN
CHUN
CHUN
ANY LIVING TARGET.

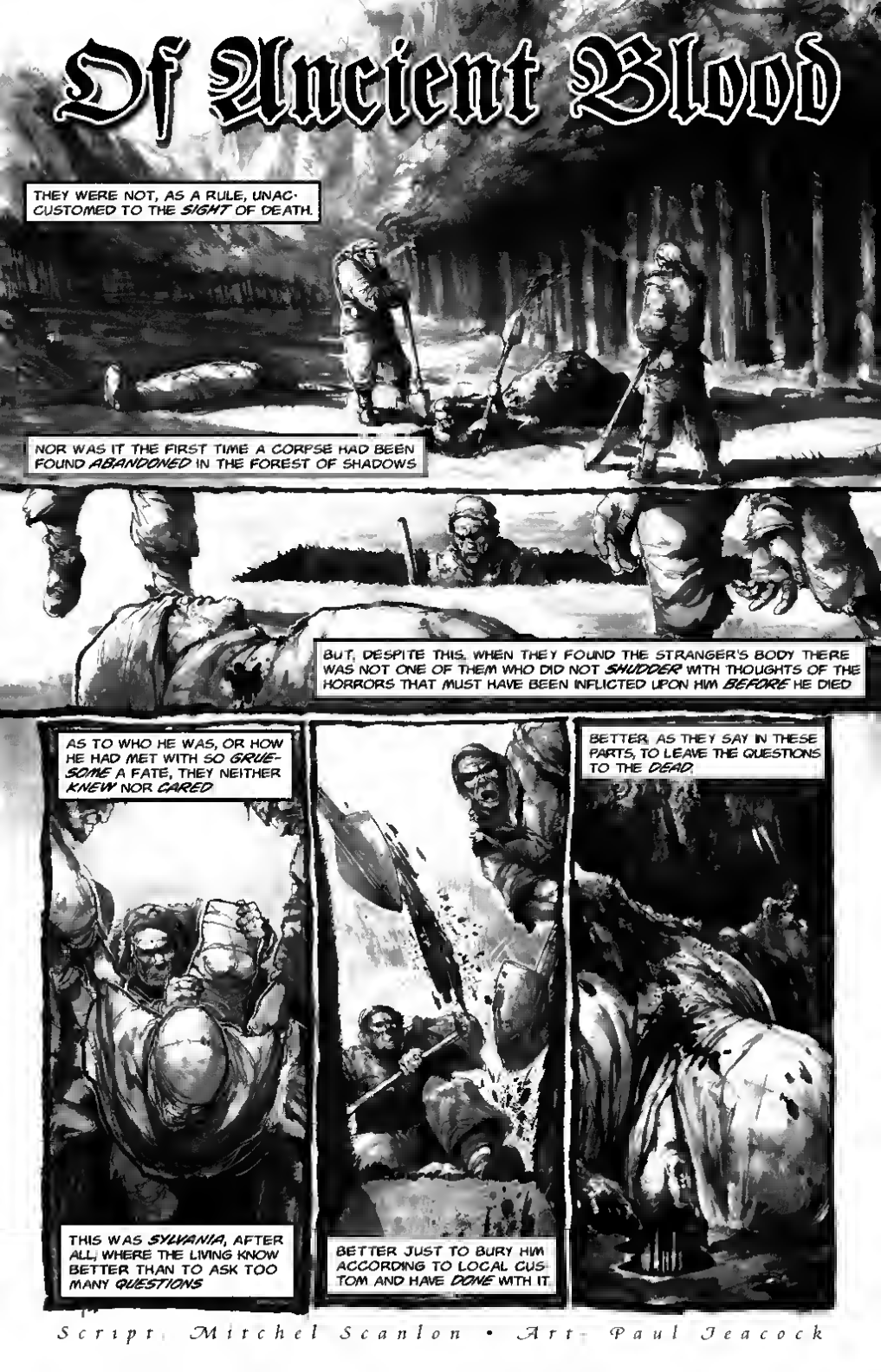
MMMM
NO MATTER WHERE I TRY TO HIDE, I KNOW THEY WILL FIND ME
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I RUN, THEY WILL ALWAYS PURSUE ME
SHUNK!
UUUUSH
BUT I AM TIRED OF HIDING. TIRED OF RUNNING.
TIRED OF TRYING TO DENY WHO AND WHAT I NOW AM —
AND WHAT I AM CAPABLE OF.

KLUNK!
TWO DAYS LATER
UNTOLD MILLIONS PASS THROUGH GATHALAMOR EVERY YEAR TRAVELLING PILGRIM ROUTES THAT CROSS THE ENTIRE IMPERIUM LINKING SHRINE WORLD TO SHRINE WORLD
THE ROUTES ARE LONG AND ARDUOUS, TAKING MANY YEARS TO COMPLETE. MANY WILL NOT SURVIVE THE JOURNEY.

FROM A THOUSAND DIFFERENT WORLDS THEY FLOCK TO FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE IMPERIUM'S GREATEST MARTYRS AND SAINTS.
FOR THE PILGRIMS IT IS A SACRED DUTY, AN ACT OF ADORATION TO THE DIVINE EMPEROR.
FOR ONE AMONGST THEM IT IS A MEANS OF ESCAPE A CHANCE TO ELUDE HER PURSUERS AMONGST THE TEEMING MASSES OF ORDINARY HUMANITY
SHE IS TIRED OF RUNNING TIRED OF HIDING
NOW SHE KNOWS WHO AND WHAT SHE IS THE DAEMONIFUGE A LIVING WEAPON AGAINST CHAOS
SHE HAS A PURPOSE A DESTINY

NOW SHE GOES IN SEARCH OF THAT DESTINY.
NEXT: DARK PATHS

Of Ancient Blood


THEY WERE NOT, AS A RULE, UNACCUSTOMED TO THE *SIGHT* OF DEATH.
NOR WAS IT THE FIRST TIME A CORPSE HAD BEEN FOUND *ABANDONED* IN THE FOREST OF SHADOWS
BUT, DESPITE THIS, WHEN THEY FOUND THE STRANGER'S BODY THERE WAS NOT ONE OF THEM WHO DID NOT *SHUDDER* WITH THOUGHTS OF THE HORRORS THAT MUST HAVE BEEN INFLICTED UPON HIM *BEFORE* HE DIED
AS TO WHO HE WAS, OR HOW HE HAD MET WITH SO *GRUESOME* A FATE, THEY NEITHER *KNEW* NOR *CARED*
THIS WAS *SYLVANIA*, AFTER ALL, WHERE THE LIVING KNOW BETTER THAN TO ASK TOO MANY *QUESTIONS*
BETTER JUST TO BURY HIM ACCORDING TO LOCAL CUSTOM AND HAVE *DONE* WITH IT.
BETTER, AS THEY SAY IN THESE PARTS, TO LEAVE THE QUESTIONS TO THE *DEAD*.

Script: Mitchel Scanlon • Art: Paul Peacock

A WEEK EARLIER, ON THE BORDERS OF SYLVANIA...
DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS OF ITS RULERS, THERE ARE STILL PARTS OF EASTERN STIRLAND WHERE IT IS CONSIDERED ILL-ADVISED TO TRAVEL WITHOUT ARMED ESCORT.
AS FOR THOSE WHO, WHETHER THROUGH POVERTY OR RASHNESS, CHOOSE TO TRAVEL WITHOUT SUCH PROTECTION...
MAKE WAY!
MAKE WAY FOR THE LADY KATARINA!
THEY MUST BE PREPARED TO RISK THE CONSEQUENCES
- AAARRGHHH!!
COACHMAN, WHY HAVE WE -
- STOPPED?!
I WARN YOU.
IF I AM HARMED YOU WILL ANSWER TO MY HUSBAND - A MAN RELATED BY BLOOD TO ONE OF THE MOST ANCIENT NOBLE HOUSES OF THE EMPIRE.
TAKES MORE THAN THE THREAT OF SOME BLUEBLOOD'S VENGEANCE TO FRIGHTEN US, BEAUTY.
THOUGH, SEEING AS I DOUBT YOUR HUSBAND WILL PAY GOOD COIN FOR THE RETURN OF SOILED GOODS, YOU ARE SAFE ENOUGH -
- FOR THE MOMENT.

AND SO IT WAS THAT A MESSAGE WAS SENT WESTWARDS -
My Lord
Your Coachman is
Claire and I am at
the mercy of his kidnap.
I am told unless the sum
of 500 gold crowns is paid
to the keeper of Pfistorn
that I too am to die.
Jake is in your hands.
- WHILE ITS AUTHOR COULD ONLY WAIT IN HOPE.
TEN DAYS, WOMAN! TEN DAYS AND NOT A WORD!
I WARN YOU - IF IT TURNS OUT YOU ARE JUST SOME HIGH-CLASS TART WHO HAS BEEN LEADING US A DANCE, YOU WILL SUFFER FOR IT.
PATIENCE, BANDIT. YOU WILL GET YOUR REWARD, SOON ENOUGH.
DON'T TAKE THAT TONE WITH ME, BEAUTY - HUH?
DON'T BE A FOOL. THAT WITLESS OAF NEVER KNOCKED ON A DOOR IN HIS LIFE
IT'S JOHANN, WITH THE MONEY-
ERNST, YOU OPEN IT. THE REST OF YOU, STAND READY.
JOHANN?!
HE MADE ME, ERNST... HE MADE ME T-

SKRAKK!
SHLITCHH!
DIE! YOU SON OF A WH-
-HEUKK!
SHLKK!
SHH-SHNKK
CHNNG!
KKRNCH!

WAIT - LISTEN! KILL ME AND YOU CHEAT YOURSELF, DON'T YOU SEE? WHATEVER THE LADY'S HUSBAND IS PAYING YOU CAN ONLY BE A FRACTION OF HER TRUE WORTH!
JOIN ME AND WE WILL SPLIT THE RANSOM...
PAYING ME?
HELMAR, I KNEW YOU WOULD COME.
AH, KATARINA. YOUR BEAUTY IS A VIBRANT FLAME IN AN OTHERWISE DULL AND DREARY WORLD
TELL ME HUSBAND YOUR PUNISHMENT OF HIM WILL IT BE EXCEEDINGLY CRUEL?
MAGNIFICENTLY SO, MY LOVE, I ASSURE YOU.
BUT... THIS CANNOT BE RIGHT! SHE SAID HER HUSBAND WAS SOME BLUEBLOOD FOP, AND YET YOU FIGHT LIKE A DAEMON.
OH YES?
I TOLD HIM, MY LORD, THAT YOU ARE RELATED BY BLOOD TO ONE OF THE MOST ANCIENT NOBLE HOUSES OF THE EMPIRE.
HOW TRUE-
-YOU HAVE HEARD, OF COURSE, OF THE VAMPIRE COUNTS OF SYLVANIA.

AFTERWARDS...
FOR NIGHT WAS DRAWING IN BY THEN. AND EVERY *CHILD* BORN OF SYLVANIA KNOWS BETTER THAN TO *LINGER* IN THE FOREST AFTER DARK.
THEIR WORK DONE, AND PRAYERS HAVING BEEN SAID THAT WHATEVER GODS THE STRANGER HAD KNOWN MIGHT LOOK KINDLY UPON HIM, THEY TOOK THEIR LEAVE, NEVER ONCE TURNING *BACK*.
AND SO IT WAS, THEY WERE LONG GONE BY THE TIME THE *SCREAMING* STARTED.
END

A HISTORY IN BLOOD

MARIUS SLOWED HIS pace His pursuers were committed now They came on as swiftly as before. How well he knew that feeling. The decision had been made It was time to close for the kill He waited until the last minute before turning to meet them Two men, as he had known there would be Medium height Wrapped in thick tunics His keen eyes picked out every stitch of the patches. Their faces were intent, long knives glittered in their hands. They intended to show no mercy They were going to kill him, and take whatever he had afterwards-or so they thought

Marius did not even bother reaching for his sword He knew he did not need it The humans moved with appalling slowness compared to him As the first reached him, Marius stretched out, grabbed round the clumsy strike and grabbed his attacker's throat One quick jerk and the man's neck broke Marius felt the vertebrae grind beneath his fingers, saw the light go out of the dead man's eyes The robber's partner had not even realised what had happened yet. Marius did not intend to give him time to

He decided he would show him something, teach him the meaning of horror He plunged his hand Such was the force of the blow that his fist penetrated flesh and dug deep into the abdomen. Marius felt wet slimy things surround his hand, and with the expertise [illegible] centuries could bring, he reached out and closed his fist. Something squished beneath his fingers, there was a curious gurgling sound as he ripped it free.

The man had only started to scream when Marius held a slab of meat up before his face. It took the unfortunate robber a moment to realise that it was his own heart.

From Vampire Slayer by William King

FOR UNTOLD CENTURIES the Vampire Counts of the known world have [illegible] upon the living, claiming the lives and souls of the innocent in their insatiable thirst for blood. From the mountains and [illegible]s of Bretonnia were the legendary Red Duke of the Blood [illegible] bloodline [illegible] to press to the Silver Pinnacle in the [illegible] Edge Mountains – home to the Queen of Lahmia and her [illegible]ed host – [illegible]s safe from the [illegible]s of the vampire. Their [illegible]s lie in the [illegible]d history of the old world dating back to the [illegible]urge of Nehekhara when many of Nagash's scrolls were [illegible]ted to Lahmia for study by Nefekhara, Queen of Lahmia. For [illegible]eds of years the queen persisted, the [illegible] magics of the [illegible]staining her immortal undeath. Long may she have reign[illegible]od over her domain had it not been for the rebellion of Al[illegible], king of the [illegible]ree realm of Nehekhara, which forced her [illegible]e north and [illegible] her court in exile.

FROM THE FLAMES of this battle rose the blood Dragon bloodline of Vampire Counts. Abhorash, general of the Lahmian armies, [illegible] to join the other Lahmian nobles in their exile in protest at their arrogance in the face of the Khemrian assault. Instead he journeyed further north until eventually he reached a mountain wreathed in fire and – acting on advice from his followers – scaled it. Upon reaching the peak he was set upon by an enormous Blood Dragon and for an entire night they fought their way to the summit until eventually Abhorash slew the dragon and drank long and deep of the creature's blood. With the dragon's blood flowing freely through his own, Abhorash no longer craved the blood of man and sent his followers out

Sorry [illegible]t have to wait until September to read the rest of this

[illegible] prove [illegible] bloodline

THE [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

TALES FROM THE TEN-TAILED CAT

THE TEN TAILED CAT IN TALABHEIM, KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE CITY AS A GATHERING PLACE FOR RACONTEURS AND THE TELLERS OF TALL TALES.
THEY COME TO THE TEN-TAILED CAT FOR MANY REASONS SOME TO BOAST OF THEIR EXPLOITS, SOME TO AMUSE AND ENTERTAIN, OTHERS TO UNBURDEN THEIR SOULS OR PASS ON DIRE WARNINGS...
AND SOME JUST COME TO DISCUSS THEIR TRADE
IT WAS GUNNAR'S TURN TO CHOOSE THE MEETING PLACE, AND FOR ONCE, THE OTHERS HAD TO ADMIT, HE CHOSE WELL
THE FOOD WAS GOOD, THE WINE PASSABLE, AND THE INNKEEPER AND HIS STAFF HAD BEEN WELL-PAID TO ENSURE THAT THE GATHERING IN THE BACK ROOM WENT UNDISTURBED
'The Assassin's Tale'
WHICH WAS FOR THE BEST, REALLY--

- FOR, WHEN ASSASSINS MEET TO TALK SHOP, THEY DO NOT CARE TO BE OVERHEARD
...THAT'S THE WAY TO KILL A MAN - WITH A BLADE GET IN CLOSE AND THEN - SHHIK - BETWEEN THE RIBS AND INTO THE HEART
RODRIGO DI MORTE- 'THE WHIMPERING BLADE' -17 KILLS

PERSONALLY, I PREFER POISONS. AFTER ALL, WHY RISK GETTING CLOSE TO THE MARK WHEN A LITTLE SOMETHING IN HIS DRINK WILL DO THE JOB JUST AS WELL
KLAUN VAN DER LOENN- 'THE SCORPION' -29 KILLS

I WAS POISONED ONCE. BOUGHT SOME BAD MEAT FROM A PEDDLER IN WURTBAD NEVER DID LIKE LAMB..
GUNNAR HOLTZ- THE BUTCHER OF WISSENBURG -34 KILLS/12 COUNTS OF AGGRAVATED PIG-BOTHERING.

NO OFFENCE, GENTLEMEN, BUT I THINK YOU ARE ALL MISSING THE POINT
OF COURSE AN ASSASSIN SHOULD BE SKILLED WITH BLADES AND POISONS, NOT TO MENTION A DOZEN OTHER METHODS OF KILLING BESIDES.
LILIANA FALCONE- 'THE BIRD OF PREY'--

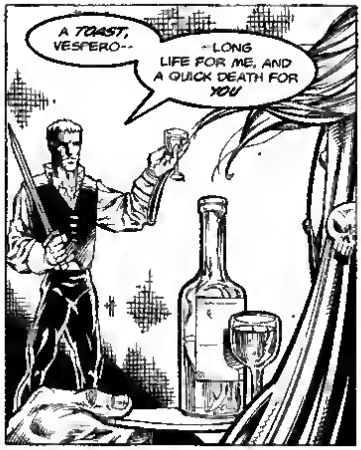
--73 KILLS
BUT THE TRUE MARK OF THE PROFESSIONAL LIES NOT IN WHAT SHE KNOWS, BUT RATHER HOW SHE USES IT
WHICH BRINGS TO MIND THE TALE OF THE TIME I WAS HIRED TO KILL A CERTAIN NOBLEMAN FROM THE EMPIRE.

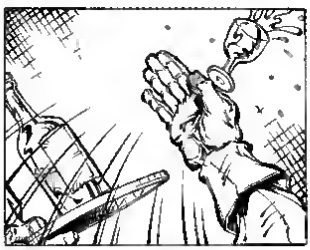
SCRIPT: MITCHEL SCANLON • ART: THE SHARP BROTHERS • LETTERS: FIONA STEPHENSON

LET US CALL HIM VON STAUBACH, FOR DISCRETION IS A VIRTUE-ESPECIALLY WHEN MURDER IS YOUR TRADE. HERE IN THE EMPIRE IT IS NOT UNCOMMON FOR HOT-BLOODED YOUNG NOBLEMEN TO CHALLENGE EACH OTHER TO SINGLE COMBAT OVER THE SLIGHTEST IMAGINED INSULT.
AND, IN THIS, VON STAUBACH WAS NO EXCEPTION
BY TRADITION, MOST SUCH 'DUELS OF HONOUR' ARE FOUGHT ONLY TO FIRST BLOOD--
--THOUGH THERE ARE ALWAYS THOSE WILLING TO DEFY CONVENTION
FOLLOWING THE MURDER OF A RIVAL, VON STAUBACH FLED SOUTH, TO THE TILEAN CITY OF MIRAGLIANO. ONLY TO LEARN THAT A MAN'S SINS ARE NOT SO EASILY ELUDED.
OPEN CONTRACT
500 CROWNS FOR THE LIFE OF THE FUGITIVE MURDERER, AUGUSTUS VON STAUBACH. TO BE PAID BY THE FAMILY OF HIS VICTIM. NO QUESTIONS ASKED.
FOR TILEA HAS ITS OWN BRAND OF DUELISTS - HIRED KILLERS WHO FIGHT, NOT FOR HONOUR OR GLORY, BUT IN THE MOREST PURSUIT OF PROFIT.
HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR HIS BODYGUARDS - A BRUTISH PAIR OF KISLEVITES BY THE NAME OF THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV - VON STAUBACH WOULD NOT HAVE LASTED A WEEK.
THOUGH, AS IT WAS, THE CANALS OF MIRAGLIANO SOON RAN RED WITH THE BLOOD OF WOULD-BE ASSASSINS.
IT WAS THEN THAT I BECAME INVOLVED AS, DESPAIRING OF THE FAILURES OF AMATEURS, VON STAUBACH'S ENEMIES AGREED TO MEET MY OWN, NOT INCONSIDERABLE, FEE.
THEIR ONLY STIPULATION VON STAUBACH MUST DIE AS HIS VICTIM HAD - AT THE POINT OF A BLADE

EASIER SAID THAN DONE, OF COURSE, WHEN UP AGAINST SUCH AN ABLY PROTECTED TARGET
UNLESS, HOWEVER, THE MARK COULD BE PERSUADED TO ACCEPT A CHALLENGE TO SINGLE COMBAT
BUT VON STAUBACH WAS NOT THE KIND OF MAN TO ACCEPT A CHALLENGE FROM A MERE WOMAN
AND SO, FOR PERHAPS THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, I FOUND MYSELF IN NEED OF A MAN
ALL RIGHT, FIVE DUCATS THEN BUT NOT A PENNY MORE
TAKE YOUR PLEASURES WHILE YOU CAN, VON STAUBACH--
A MAN LIKE VESPERO
--FOR TOMORROW YOU DIE
VESPERO! THE MOST FEARED DUELLIST IN ALL ITALY--
--BUT SURELY HIRING HIM MUST HAVE COST MORE THAN VON STAUBACH'S LIFE WAS WORTH!
I AM SURE IT WOULD HAVE - HAD I HIRED THE REAL VESPERO..
WHICH IS WHY I HIRED PIETRO - A COMMON CUTTHROAT - WHO AGREED TO PLAY THE PART OF VESPERO FOR AN ALTOGETHER MORE REASONABLE FEE.
BUT IF THE REAL VESPERO HAD FOUND OUT ABOUT YOUR DECEPTION--
FORTUNATELY, VESPERO HAS NOT BEEN SEEN IN MIRAGLIANO SINCE THE DEATH OF PRINCE BORGIO--
--WHILE POOR PIETRO SUFFERED A TRAGIC ACCIDENT LATER THAT VERY NIGHT. A SHAME REALLY, AS HE HAD THE ONE QUALITY I ALWAYS LOOK FOR IN A MAN--
--GULLIBILITY.
BUT BY THEN, VON STAUBACH HAD ALREADY ACCEPTED THE CHALLENGE - LITTLE REALISING THAT WHEN HE FOUGHT 'VESPERO' THERE WOULD BE A WOMAN BENEATH THE MASK.

THOUGH FIRST THERE WERE THE USUAL *PLEASANTRIES* TO BE DISPENSED WITH...
AH, VESPERO, SO *GOOD* OF YOU TO COME
IT IS MY *CUSTOM* TO SHARE A DRINK WITH AN OPPONENT BEFORE DUELLING PERHAPS I CAN TEMPT YOU WITH A GLASS OF THIS FINE BORDELEAUX, TAKEN FROM MY OWN *PRIVATE* STOCK


A *TOAST*, VESPERO--
--LONG LIFE FOR ME, AND A QUICK DEATH FOR *YOU*



--ONCE YOU ARE *DEAD!*

NO MATTER. THERE WILL BE TIME ENOUGH FOR WINE *LATER*--

RRRIPP!!

KKZCHT

A WOMAN!
I THOUGHT YOU SEEMED TALLER LAST NIGHT STILL--
--IT WON'T BE THE FIRST TIME I'VE KILLED A WUUUHKK!!
KARAMAZOVS! HELP ME! I HAVE BEEN POISON--
PERHAPS IT WOULD HAVE BEEN WISER TO HAVE PAID MORE ATTENTION TO THE SECURITY OF YOUR WINE CELLAR, VON STAUBACH. BUT, DO NOT FEAR--
--I HAVE SOMETHING HERE THAT SHOULD EASE YOUR PAIN
SO YOU SEE, MY FRIENDS, IT TOOK BOTH BLADES AND POISONS - AND NOT A LITTLE CUNNING BESIDES - TO KILL VON STAUBACH.
BUT THEN, YOU KNOW, IT IS TRUE WHAT THEY SAY--
--SOMETIMES, THE BEST WAY TO A MAN'S HEART REALLY IS THROUGH HIS STOMACH
THE END

NEW FROM THE BLACK LIBRARY

On the isolated world of Sigmatus, teetering on the edge of the Eye of Terror, the century long war between the natives and the hated regime of the Imperial governor reaches its climax when rumours of an approaching Imperial fleet sweep the planet. But the rebels are not to be so easily conquered. Using their darkest rites they summon a powerful daemon and unleash it upon their enemies in a deadly clash of technological might against unholy magic. As we've come to expect from Brian Craig, Pawns of Chaos is a breathtakingly original and innovative look at the ongoing conflict of the far future, the grim darkness of the 40K universe has never appeared so real than when seen through the eyes of both the greatest and the smallest of those swept up in the struggle.

Also upcoming, The Gothic and the Eldritch, the long-awaited collected sketches of sculpting supremo Jes Goodwin, one of the most instrumental artists for the Games Workshop miniature range today. Follow some of your favourite models from start to finish and discover some of the secrets of the design process along the way. This lavish artbook is crammed with the concept sketches for figures ranging from Heroes of the Imperium to vile Chaos Champions and much more besides, some never-before-seen and designs for products yet to be released!

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INCOMING

✦

✦

✦

✦✦ Dear guys, I collect orks and they rock and so do your books, but they all contains stories about humies trying what they can where ever they can, and to be honest I'M SICK OF IT. It would be interesting if you could get one of your writer guys to write a story about an ork. I don't care if it's Warhammer or 40K, whatever as long as the hero is a ork. I hope you will consider my idea because I think it will be great.

✦ Richard Cutayar – via email.

✦

✦✦ Ork Stories!? Ork Stories!? You alien loving slime are never satisfied are you? It's not enough that 'Deff Skwadron' is a regular feature in Inferno! magazine. Not enough that 'Better Da Warboss Ya Know' appeared in issue 26 of this very publication. And not to mention the innumerable amount of times those vile greenskins have been used for target practica in 'Titan', 'Bloodquest' and all the other fantastic strips in Warhammer Monthly! By the Golden Throne, there's just no pleasing some peopie!

✦

✦✦ Wassup, heretics Your mag has to be one of the coolest I have ever READ! It's a good thing you brought in a new look for the mag but you made one Solar System-sized mistake... WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO GUTSPEW AND BANEBLADE?????? I enjoyed reading about the things they both go through just to get the first read of the comic, especially when one of them pulls the trigger. Pleeeeaaaase bring 'em back to the start of the mag and not the letters page in the back of the mag. Well, gotta go

✦ Jon-T – via email.

✦

✦✦ What do you mean GUTSPEW and Baneblade? The last time I saw that pile of pungent protoplasm he was burnt to a cinder and certainly in no fit state to be answering letters from the fine readers of this sacred tome. What's that!?! He was here last issue spreading his heresy and lies!?! Right, where's my bolter? it seems I still have work to do...

✦

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